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**REMARKS  
BY  
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA  
BANGLADESH DISASTER RESPONSE EXERCISE AND EXCHANGE,  
2013  
CLOSING CEREMONY**

**Lakeshore Hotel, Dhaka  
August 21, 2013**

The Honorable Minister for Disaster Management and Relief A.H. Mahmood Ali, MP

Lt. Gen. Abu Belal Muhammad Shafiul Huq, Principal Staff Officer, Armed Forces Division

Major General Darrell Moore, Mobilization Assistant to the Commander, U.S. Pacific Command

... and you ... Bangladeshis, Americans, international partners ... you ... members of the military, civilians, representatives of civil society and the private sector ... you ... you who look tired and exhausted after a demanding four days of grappling with the aftermath of a major earthquake ... all of you ...

Asalaam 'malaikum and good afternoon

I am surprised by how fresh your uniforms and other attire appear ...

I imagine that each of you is wearing the last clean thing you have in the closet or suitcase, as you obviously have been working hard and sweating freely, literally and figuratively, over these past four days, as I just learned from the excellent summary of this exercise.

You certainly are not the same people who had gathered in this room Sunday morning for the DREE Opening Ceremony.

Since then, you have dealt with the virtual reality of the consequences of a major earthquake hitting the Dhaka metropolitan area ... tens of thousands of buildings had collapsed ... thousands were killed ... over ten thousand injured ... basic infrastructure was damaged, destroyed, blocked. The horror of the situation was beyond imagination ... tension, uncertainty, fear, all heightened by the ever recurring aftershocks ... that has been your virtual world these past days.

Into this unfathomable chaos, you brought order; you brought together the key decision makers and established effective command and control, even though the National Disaster Response Coordination Center itself had collapsed; you rescued over ten thousand injured people; you pulled thousands of bodies from the rubble; you reopened the airport and coordinated international relief efforts; you endeavored to re-establish essential medical services and basic infrastructure, such as the supply of water and food; you assessed standing buildings to ascertain whether they were still safe to occupy; you created a plan to deal with the millions of tons of debris, while you engineered access routes through the debris, so relief and essential supplies could reach the people ... you did all of this and so much more.

These past four days have been tough, sobering.

But this is how it had to be ... this is how the exercise had to be to generate the hard, hard questions that I referred to during my remarks at Sunday's Opening Ceremony.

You asked those questions ... and you struggled and struggled with the answers ... you discovered that there are no easy answers, no neat solutions, no quick fixes, no perfect answers ... but you also discovered that answering these hard, hard questions, solving these impossible challenges, responding to the basic needs of the people would be more effective, much more effective with good, in-depth advance planning and preparation ... planning and preparation that anticipated the hard, hard questions ... planning and preparation that retrofitted essential buildings and structures so these essential facilities would be available after an earthquake ... planning and preparation that identified key decision makers and undertook to ensure their ability to survive the disaster ... planning and preparation that created an emergency communications system that would replace the destroyed landline and cell phone systems ... planning and preparation that facilitated international relief efforts, eliminating unnecessary delays ... planning and preparation that identified, trained and equipped tens of thousands of professional and volunteer rescuers, so they could carry out their rescue missions without endangering themselves or further injuring the victims ... this listing of the planning and preparation that Bangladesh needs to consider goes on and on ... but I think I have made my point ... planning and preparation pay off ... that is the fundamental message of this exercise ... planning and preparation are essential.

This is the challenge to the government, military, civil society, people of Bangladesh ... to plan, to prepare for the unthinkable. This, of course, is the same challenge to all those other countries represented in this exercise.

In a few minutes the Minister will bring this historic earthquake preparedness session to a close. The lights will dim; we will have a cup of tea together and then we will go our separate ways ... DREE 2013 will then be finished ... but, as we well know, the work has only just begun ... the work has only just begun. Planning and preparation ... all the needs that you, the Exercise participants, have identified for planning and preparing for an earthquake ... those many needs now become available to Bangladesh ... government, military, civil society, international partners, all stakeholders ... to consider, to assess, to prioritize, and to implement, as appropriate.

As demonstrated by Bangladesh's deep and aggressive participation in this and earlier earthquake-driven exercises, I believe/I know Bangladesh is committed to thinking the unthinkable ... I believe/I know Bangladesh is committed to planning and preparing for a major earthquake ... I believe/I know Bangladesh will undertake all possible and appropriate steps to plan for/to prepare for that horrible earthquake that we know is coming ... is coming perhaps tomorrow, next week, next year, in a decade or two.

It is not a question of whether or if ... it is only a question of when ...

I believe that when the earthquake does strike, Bangladesh ... thanks to powerful exercises like DREE and appropriate follow-up actions to assess and implement recommendations to plan and prepare ... will be able to respond effectively.

Thank you.

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*\*As prepared for delivery.*